

Ukraine Crisis

Supporting Ukraine on the cultural front

CREATIVESUNITE

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The European Commission has been supporting the creative communities of Ukraine since the start of the war more than a year ago. Programs like Creative Europe, Erasmus+ and initiatives on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the country provide crucial support to diverse cultural and creative sectors of Ukraine, and the Creatives Unite platform is an integral part of this.

More than one year on, the unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine has led to great suffering, and it has raised serious concerns about peace and stability in the continent. The EU has firmly condemned this violation of international law. In 2022, the overall support provided by the EU budget amounted to €11.6 billion, and unprecedented support for Ukraine is allocated for 2023 across all sectors of financial and social life, amounting to €18 billion. On top of this, €450 million will be provided in humanitarian assistance and bilateral support to increase Ukraine's resilience and support reforms.

The Ukrainian community of creatives has been instrumental in articulating and communicating the country's message against Russian aggression to the world. The culture war has been an integral part of the Ukrainian resistance, not only by defending the Ukrainian identity and the country's heritage, but also through the use of Media and Social Media in spreading the message. The European Union (EU) recognises the vital role Ukrainian artists and creatives play in defending the country and shaping its future. EU support has been provided in different

formats:

- The Creative Europe program , provides funding and support for cultural and creative initiatives across the continent. In September 2022 the European Commission issued a special call allocating €5 million to support Ukrainian artists, and activities will start mid-2023.
- The EU funded European Competence Centre for Cultural Heritage (4CH) is contributing to the digitisation of the rich cultural heritage of the country. Together with multiple partners and authorities, it has created the SUM initiative ('Save the Ukrainian Monuments') in order to digitise and preserve Ukrainian cultural heritage for future generations. So far more than 120 terabytes of data have been stored.
- The Erasmus+ program, provides opportunities for students and artists to study and work in other European countries. The EU has also been supporting Ukrainian artists through cultural exchanges and partnerships, notably through its 'Culture Moves Europe' initiative (€21 million covering 2023-2025).
- The EU's Eastern Partnership program has facilitated collaborations between Ukrainian and European cultural institutions, and it has supported artists with mobility programs allowing for the sharing of ideas, resources, and knowledge.
- Last but not least, the EU is funding a €2 million dedicated action on emergency protection of cultural heritage. This is implemented by the Aliph Foundation.

The Creatives Unite platform on Ukraine

Even during the war, cultural events never stopped happening in Ukraine. Creatives Unite has been consistently informing the European public about the news of the creative industries, the supporting programs, and funding opportunities in Europe, providing sufficient and immediate information to artists in need. Almost all cultural events have a fundraising purpose to donate to the Ukrainian army or separate units of the army and medical staff.

- The platform has shared stories of the Ukrainian artists supported by MakersXchange Ukrainian Artists & Creatives Support Program, a pilot policy project, co-funded by the European Union. The program took early action, providing financial support, guidance, and professional assistance to all applicants.
- Gregory Zarkhin, project manager at LEM Station, described how the Ukrainian cultural front organized

events in a gigantic bomb shelter in Kyiv with multiple concerts and contributed all the money to the Ukrainian army.
- Serhiy Klymko, founder of the Emergency Support Initiative by Kyiv Biennial talked to us about the cultural events happening in old cultural infrastructure that keep cities alive.
- The annual conference of the European Creative Hubs Network dedicated a series of sessions to the welcoming of Ukrainian artists in creative hubs and cultural spaces.
- The representatives of two Ukrainian hubs, IZONE and LEM Station, gave an overview of the situation in their country and the support they have received from the beginning of the invasion.
- Creatives Unite has shared the story of the Musicians Defend Ukraine Charity Foundation that involves the global music industry in supporting Ukrainian artists who defend their cities.
- The Forum "Museum of Ukrainian Victory", dedicated to digitizing heritage in Ukraine.
- The platform is also regularly updating funding opportunities, initiatives and news targeted to Ukraine.

Following the Kalush Orchestra that led Ukraine to victory at last year's Eurovision Song Contest, Ukrainian singer-song-writer Jerry Heil won the Public Choice Award of the EU-funded Music Moves Europe Awards, in January. Much more is yet to come. The Creatives Unite platform will be on the ground to bring you the latest, and help the creatives meet their communities and find ways to give us back the vibrant voices that Europe needs.